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MARRIED LOVE: A NEW CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOLUTION OF SEX DIFFICULTIES. By Marie Carmichael Stopes, D.Sc., Ph.D., Fellow of University College, London. With a Preface by Dr. Jessie Murray and Letters from Professor E. H. Starling, F.R.S., and Father Stanislaus St. John, S.J. London: A. C. Fifield, 1918. Pp. ix, 134. Price, 5s. net.

This book is doubly important. It is not only a brief, candid, yet idealistic account of sex processes and the physical side of marriage, it is also an exposition of an original theory of women's erotic periodicity: a theory which Dr. Marie Stopes proposes to define and elaborate in a technical medical treatise, and on which she asks her readers to supply available data whether *pro* or *con*. As she says, this generalised statement "may be of great medical and sociological value," and it is to be hoped that further researches will be made on it.

Briefly summarised, Doctor Stopes' theory, which is based on investigations and records of many individual cases, is that, in adult "normally healthy" women, there is a natural recurrence of more or less definite and ardent sexual desire at intervals of a fortnight: that these "crests of the sex tide" occur, as a rule, immediately before the monthly period, and eight or nine days after its close; that in women who are undervitalized or overworked, only one of these desire-crests is at all acutely or consciously felt; and that of course in many cases "a woman may never have experienced any spontaneous sex-impulse at all." Further, Doctor Stopes insists on the distinction to be drawn between this fortnightly sex-rhythm, and the menstrual cycle, which itself is subject to infinite diversities in individual women, and she states explicitly that the crests of the fortnightly wave may extend over three or four days. She allows for the individual variations of sex in women, and also for the effect of outside influences, in the following striking and poetical simile. "Woman is so sensitive and responsive an instrument, and so liable in our modern civilised world, to be influenced by innumerable sets of stimuli, that it is perhaps scarcely surprising that the deep underlying waves of her primitive sex-tides have been obscured and entangled, so that their regular sequence has been masked in the choppy turmoil of her sea, and their existence has been largely unsuspected and apparently quite unstudied."

The book also contains a fine vindication of birth-control, and the very sane and fundamental statement that "the very restraint

which adds to a man's strength up to a point, taxes his strength when carried beyond it." Also (p. 43), "it seems to me never justifiable to spend so much energy and will power on restraining natural impulses, that valuable work and intellectual power and poise are made to suffer."

Whatever view may be taken of the fortnightly theory, there is no doubt that the chapters on "Mutual Adjustment," "Modesty and Romance" and "Sleep" contain much admirable advice and badly needed instruction, gracefully and happily expressed, and should be carefully read by husbands, wives and lovers. But two criticisms on the general attitude of the writer occur to me, very insistently. Firstly, the book is quite frankly based on observation of, and addressed to, the educated, prosperous and privileged classes. Doctor Stopes does not seem to admit that immense industrial, social and legislative changes are necessary, before the majority of her fellow citizens are able even approximately to develop and refine their erotic nature, sufficiently to follow her suggestions. Secondly (and closely connected with the first omission), she tends in her advocacy of "an ever nobler and tenderer form of life-long monogamy as our social ideal" to overlook the fact that the present legally sanctioned patriarchal monogamy rests on the subjection of women, and implies prostitution as a male "safety-valve" and the "double standard." Undoubtedly much of the distressing and wholly preventable unhappiness in sexual unions arises from men's ignorance of women's needs and natures: but an equally tragic amount of misery and misunderstanding arises from women's ignorance of men's needs and natures. Yet this feminine ignorance is inextricably connected with women's economic dependence and with the tyrannous demand for theoretical ignorance and anatomical virginity in the bride.

Doctor Stopes has shown in her fine remarks on richness and variety of active interests, on jealousy and on the social aspects of marriage, that she is far-seeing enough to realise some of the deficiencies of present conditions and present moral ideas. Will she not carry her researches and her conclusions further, to the very root of the matter?

F. W. STELLA BROWNE.